



Family Court Project

Martin County

Basic Information

Population:	10,000+
County Seat:	Shoals
Judicial Officers:	N/A
Date of Project Implementation:	1/1/2012
Project Judge/s:	Judge Lynne E. Ellis
Administrative Contact:	Kathy Collins, Director Martin Co. Comm. Corrections
Project Funding:	\$7,500.00

Family Court Mission Statement

Please provide a mission statement for your Family Court Programming

CASS is a program designed for an individual student facing suspension who will not be left unsupervised during the period of their suspension from school; it will provide the student an opportunity to receive credit for school work completed while in the CASS classroom; provide an alternative placement for the student who does not cooperate with the CASS classroom expectations; and provides a program(s) that give the suspended student life skills training to make better choices.

Family Court Programming

Please provide a description your Family Court Programming

Mrs. Kathy Collins, Martin County Community Corrections Director, who formerly worked for the Shoals Community Schools, knew that a great need for adolescent and youth intervention existed in the school system, but lack of funds prevented proactive involvement. The Honorable Lynne Ellis, Martin County Circuit Court Judge, knew that there were increasing numbers of young adults entering the court system, due to truancy and delinquent activities. Judge Ellis and Director Collins, who have always been very supportive and involved in the community, began considering how their respective Departments could assist. In the Winter of 2011, the Martin County Community Corrections Department researched the need for positive intervention for Martin County juveniles entering the local Justice System. This information was then compared to the Shoals Junior-Senior High student population showing the relationship between increased absenteeism/tardiness, suspension/expulsions, and ultimately student dropout rates. The data showed 43% of the students in the Probation system had actually been suspended or expelled and, on occasion, further

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Division of State Court Administration
30 South Meridian Street, Suite 500
Indianapolis, IN 46204

deteriorated their situation by getting into more trouble while assigned an "out-of-school" suspension. This information led the Community Corrections Department to search for funding for an alternative youth Program. In order to make the CASS Program successful, Judge Ellis and Director Collins knew that CASS instructors would need to have familiarity with at-risk populations, either through education and/or work experience; qualified individuals who have a personal desire for affecting positive change regarding at-risk behavior in school. After much searching, a few qualified individuals met that criteria and were asked to become independent contract instructors for the CASS Program. These instructors are paid exclusively from Grant Funds, are specially trained to meet CASS expectations, and instructors remain on-call for instructing assignments throughout the school year. The CASS Program provides a Program that gives the suspended student life skills training to make better choices. The Pilot Program began in the Shoals Jr-Sr High School, and the CASS Program has become instrumental in redirecting disruptive and inattentive behaviors. The Program has reduced truancy and dropout rates, and has provided the assigned students with an opportunity to receive school credit for successful completion of assignments. In addition, the student is given the opportunity for positive re-engagement with the school system. The support of the school administration is imperative to the success of the Program and Shoals administrators have exceeded the CASS expectations by complying with CASS Program needs. To date, the CASS Program has been used approximately 175 days. Having met the requirements for the CASS Program, the Loogootee Jr-Sr High School administrators are scheduled to begin utilizing the CASS Program, Program expectations, instructor guidelines and Program policies. It is an exciting time to see a second site added, giving an opportunity for both Martin County school systems to reap the benefits of the CASS Program. The length of sustainability lies in providing evidence of the success of the Program, as well as meeting the Family Court Grant's guidelines of serving families. The continuation of the Family Court Grant, as well as \$5,000 per year approved through Martin County Community Corrections State Grant funding, will see the CASS Program continue through the 2015-2016 school year. The Program's overall positive effects will become more apparent as they have with graduation statistics for Shoals. The 2011-2012 graduation rate of 67.7 was increased to 80.5 in 2012-2013, according to the Indiana Department of Education's website. The CASS Program has, we believe, had an impact on this success, and will continue to add another tool in the tool belts of our Schools' Administrators.

Number of Families Served

Please provide an estimate of the number of families served through the Family Court Programming

60